

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02 IO-10 /081 W

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P R 160946Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1234

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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PARIS FOR MELONE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, ML, UV

SUBJECT: MALI PRESIDENT EXCORIATES UPPER VOLTA ACTIONS
IN PRESS INTERVIEW

REF: BAMAKO 1364

1. IN A LONG EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW APRIL 11 WITH THE MALI REPRESENTATIVE OF AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE (AFP), PRESIDENT TRAORE AGAIN CONDEMNED UPPER VOLTAN AUTHORITIES FOR HAVING INVADED MALIAN TERRITORY LAST DECEMBER AND FOR CARRYING ON A PERSECUTION CAMPAIGN AGAINST MALIAN NATIONALS LIVING IN UPPER VOLTA. THE INTERVIEW (WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN PUBLISHED) COVERS MOST OF THE INFORMATION ALREADY REPORTED IN REFTEL AND INDEED, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A REPLAY OF THE STRONG PRONOUNCEMENTS MADE TO AMBASSADOR MCGUIRE ONLY A WEEK BEFORE.

2. TRAORE'S SCATHING INDICTMENT OF UPPER VOLTA INCLUDES
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THE FOLLOWING ACCUSATIONS: (A) KILLING OF MALIANS IN UPPER

VOLTA BY SHOOTING AND EVEN SETTING THEM ON FIRE AND IN GENERAL CARRYING ON OR PERMITTING A MANHUNT AGAINST MALIAN EXPATRIATES AS A REVENGE FOR LOSING ON THE BATTLE-FIELD; (B) REFUSING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TECHNICAL COMMISSION TALKS ON SEPTEMBER 7, 1974; (C) HOLDING THE FARAMANA MEETING OF THE TWO CHIEFS OF STATE IN UPPER VOLTA EVEN THOUGH THE PRECEDENT CALLED FOR THE MEETING TO BE HELD IN MALI; (D) THE UNPROVOKED INVASION OF MALIAN TERRITORY BY UPPER VOLTAN TROOPS ON DECEMBER 14 WHICH FORCED MALI TO REPLY WITH MILITARY FORCE; (E) ARRESTING AND HUMILIATING MALIAN EMPLOYEES OF THE CEAO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS HEADQUARTERED IN OUAGADOUGOU; (F) DISREGARDING THE LOME ACCORDS, A FACT WHICH WAS RECOGNIZED NOT ONLY BY THE LOME MEDIATION COMMISSION, AND THE RED CROSS COMMISSION BUT BY THE HEADS OF STATE WHO ATTENDED THE CEAO CONFERENCE INCLUDING SENGHOR AND KOUNTCHE (THE FINAL CEAO COMMUNIQUE REFERRED TO THE NEED TO RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF NATIONALS WORKING FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN OUAGADOUGOU); AND (G) CLOSING THE BORDER.

3. LAMENTING THAT HE AGREED TO THE OAU REQUEST TO MEET IN LOME WITH "A MAN WHOSE HANDS WERE FRESHLY SOILED BY THE BLOOD OF INNOCENT MALIANS," TRAORE INSISTS IN THIS INTERVIEW THAT ONLY BY RESPECTING THE JURIDICAL DOCUMENTS NOT THE MAPS CAN THE BORDER DISPUTE BE SOLVED. TRAORE REPEATED WHAT HE HAD SAID EARLIER TO AMBASSADOR MCGUIRE, NAMELY, THAT HE WOULD ABIDE BY THE DECISION OF THE OAU MEDIATION COMMISSION "EVEN IF THEY DECIDE THAT THE FRONTIER SHOULD PASS THROUGH BAMAKO." HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT OBSERVED THAT AS FAR AS HE KNEW THE DISPUTED AREA DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY NATURAL RESOURCES. TRAORE ENDED HIS DIATRIBE AGAINST PRESIDENT LAMIZANA BY AFFIRMING MALI'S DESIRE TO SETTLE THE BORDER DISPUTE PEACEFULLY.

4. IN THE SAME INTERVIEW TRAORE REITERATED HIS INTENTION TO RELEASE POLITICAL DETAINEES "SOON" WITH A WARNING HOWEVER THAT THEY MUST NOT ENGAGE IN ANY KIND OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY OR AGITATION.

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5. COMMENT: PRESIDENT TRAORE'S REMARKS MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE BORDER DISPUTE REMAINS A HIGHLY CHARGED EMOTIONAL ISSUE WHICH COULD EASILY LEAD TO A RENEWAL OF THE FIGHTING. AT BEST TRAORE'S VICIOUS PERSONAL ATTACK AGAINST PRESIDENT LAMIZANA, A FORMER CLOSE MILITARY COLLEAGUE, INDICATES THAT IT WILL BE A VERY LONG TIME BEFORE ANYTHING LIKE NORMAL RELATIONS ARE RESUMED BETWEEN THESE TWO WEST AFRICAN NEIGHBORS.

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